



Meet and Hear LWVE Member and Author Beth Davis!

Long-time LWVE member, long-term Evanston alderwoman, attorney, and author Beth Boosalis Davis will be our speaker at a luncheon on Thursday, December 11. Her focus will be on her recently-published book, *Mayor Helen Boosalis: My Mother's Life in Politics*.



Beth's mother, Helen Boosalis, eased into political life through involvement with her local LWV and election to the City Council. Over time her passion for improved government, coupled with savvy she learned along the way, found her running for high office. In 1975 Helen Boosalis became the first female mayor of Lincoln, Nebraska, and later became the first female president of the U. S. Conference of Mayors. In 1986, she ran as the Democratic nominee for governor of Nebraska. Her opponent was Kay Orr, a Republican candidate in a Republican state. It was the first gubernatorial contest in U. S. history in which both candidates were women. (The vote was close, but Helen Boosalis did lose that election.)

Beth's book is a very personal memoir and a fascinating history of one woman's path through an extraordinary political career. At the luncheon, Beth will read excerpts from her book and reflect on the importance of participation in local government. Please plan to join us for this heartening "family" event.

The luncheon will be held at Gio, 1631 Chicago Avenue, at 11:45 on December 11. The cost will be \$20, payable at the door. RSVP no later than Tuesday, December 9, to Holly Heap, hheap@comcast.net or **847-869-2723**. Feel free to bring a friend!

Successful Second Constitution Contest for Evanston's 7th-Graders

With generous support from League volunteers, community volunteers, and Evanston School District 65, the second annual LWVE Constitution Contest was another resounding success. Students submitted hundreds of entries in one of three categories: Written Word, Performance Art, or Visual Art. All of the entrants are to be congratulated on a job well done.

Below, left, are Jamilla Pitts, Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator for District 65, and LWVE contest organizer Michelle Jordan. Both devoted tremendous time, talent, and heart to this contest, all the while working at their own full-time, demanding jobs. At the lower, right with Michelle and Jamilla are LWVE judges Susan Black, Iona Beller, Eleonora DiLiscia, and Peggy Lipschutz (seated).



Mark Your Calendar!

"Nuts and Bolts of Campaigning"

Sat., Dec. 6, 8 a. m. to noon
Civic Center (2100 Ridge), Parasol Room

Constitution Contest Expo and Awards Ceremony

Sat., Dec. 6: Expo 2-4 p. m.; awards at 4 p. m.
Hill Education Center, 1500 McDaniel

Luncheon Program

Speaker: Beth Boosalis Davis
Thurs., Dec. 11, 11:45 a. m.
Gio, 1631 Chicago Ave., Evanston
RSVP by Dec. 9 to Holly Heap

Next LWVE Board Meeting

Thursday, Dec. 11, 7-9 p. m.
King Home, 1555 Oak Ave., Evanston
All members are welcome.

Holiday Book-Wrapping

Dec. 18 through 23
Barnes & Noble and Borders
Contact Sonia Evenstad to volunteer

Luncheon Program

Carolyn Collopy, Dir. of Evanston Office of Sustainability speaks on "Evanston's Commitment to Becoming 'Greener'"
Weds., Jan. 28, 11:45 a. m.
Gio, 1631 Chicago Ave., Evanston

LWVIL Issues Briefing and Workshops

Sat., Jan. 31, 2009
University Center, 525 S. State Street, Chicago

Education Fund Benefit

Evening of Sat., April 25, 2009
Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Clarence Page. Support your League and bring friends!

LWVIL State of the State Luncheon

Thurs., Feb. 26, 2009 – details to follow
Speaker: Journalist Carol Marin

Readers, Please Note!

This is a combined Dec./Jan. issue of *The Intercom*. Also, you do not need to wait for an e-mail notification of new issues; they are on our Web site by the first of each month: www.lwve.org. Click on the **NEWSLETTER** link, then on the month of the issue you wish to read.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



There is regeneration in remembrance, too, in recovering a sense of who we might be based on the memory of who we once were.

The New York Times, editorial, Christmas Day, 2003

We have just completed our national elections, and I think all citizens, regardless of party affiliation, appreciate the historic magnitude of the outcome. Over the past several months, the League of Women Voters' efforts to register voters and get out the vote contributed to both increased registration and increased participation in the election. League members were also instrumental in poll-watching and -reporting to identify any irregularities at the polls. Through all of these efforts, democracy and good government were given a better chance. Thank you to all League members who helped with these various efforts.

At the state level, the Illinois referendum on whether to call a state constitutional convention was defeated. The LWVIL opposed the referendum; and, again, my thanks to the many League members who organized and attended programs on the League's position. My particular thanks to those members who spoke to civic organizations on the topic.

In Evanston we are quickly approaching our local elections. As with the national and state elections, the League will be working to help citizens become better informed and more involved in the issues surrounding these elections. The mayoral field is crowded – there is the possibility of a mayoral primary – and there will be aldermanic turnover in several wards. In the new year, the League will conduct candidate forums and promote citizen participation and education in other ways.

After any election, I think there is that bittersweet moment of hope mixed with the acknowledgement that our government is purposefully structured to move slowly. Certainly with the daunting economic climate and two war fronts, hope seems almost foolhardy. And yet, as we approach the holiday season, I encourage all of us to savor that kernel of hope to its fullest extent.

On December 6th, from 2-4 PM, the League of Women Voters of Evanston will present its second annual Constitution Contest Expo and Awards Ceremony at the Joseph E. Hill Education Center. In light of the presidential election, students were asked to choose one right, protected by a Constitutional Article or Amendment, that they would focus on in their own presidential campaigns. The energy and creativity these young citizens put into their essays and performance and visual art confirm the vibrancy not only of our democracy, but our Constitution. I hope you will all attend. Thanks to Michelle Jordan and her committee for their hard work on this project.

By the time I compose my next letter, the presidential inauguration will be over, and we will be underway with our new projects. In the new year, the League will be focusing on local government issues, in conjunction with the upcoming elections. May our historic presidential election, and our remembrance of holidays past, regenerate the best in all of us this holiday season.

I look forward to working with you in the new year. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Karen



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THE INTERCOM

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MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through citizen education and advocacy.

The LWVE welcomes men as well as women and encourages all residents of our diverse community to participate.



Speaker Presages Election Outcome

By Karen Telser and Helen Gagel

Speaking on “The Media and the Election” at the League’s Oct. 31 luncheon at Gio, Prof. Craig LaMay of Northwestern’s Institute for Policy Research commented on how the Obama campaign’s Internet strategy had changed the face of US Presidential campaigns. LaMay, who co-authored with Newton Minow a book about presidential debates (*Inside the Presidential Debates: Their Improbable Past and Promising Future*), said, “Our TV debates are admired and emulated throughout the Western world...but this year it really is an Internet campaign...these times are unique.”

Prof. LaMay pointed out many interesting facts about televised Presidential debates, including that, prior to 1960, asking Presidential candidates to debate was considered demeaning. Following the 1960 televised Nixon/Kennedy debates – which many felt Nixon lost because of his “5 o’clock shadow” – many candidates would not engage in televised debates. The LWVUS was instrumental in forming the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), which has sponsored Presidential campaign debates since 1988. The CPD has since received a great deal of criticism, however, with some saying that CPD debates are “not real debates”; that the CPD is an impediment to political parties other than the two major ones; and that it is “owned by” the two major parties.

Prof. LaMay said that some political observers think that journalists should not moderate debates, fearing that reporters are in the business of attracting viewers, and, therefore “tend to ask gotcha questions” and do “unbalanced questioning.”

“Television is still the kingpin for Presidential advertising,” said Prof. LaMay; but Gov. Howard Dean – as a candidate for the Democratic nomination in 2004 – changed everything with his on-line meetings. In 2008, the Obama campaign changed everything again. Sen. Obama hired Chris Hughes, founder of the on-line social directory Facebook, to create a Web presence for him across the country and the world. A major feature of the Obama Web site is that it’s interactive: “When you leave, you have something to do: donate money, make telephone calls, throw a party or bake sale.” That has been extremely effective in engaging people. “Web sites are ‘the best and only genuine part of the campaign. With his Web page, Sen. Obama has created a community.”

His final advice for voters: “When assessing a candidate, read widely, watch judiciously, and cross-examine.” That sounds like what League members do as a matter of course!

“What Happened?”

By Karen Telser

The speaker for our Nov. 17 program at The Celtic Knot was Jim Kenney, co-founder of Common Ground, a Deerfield-based organization concerned with “the human quest for understanding and the human pursuit of significance.” His topic title referred to the recent Presidential election.

It was a packed room and a packed discussion. Mr. Kenney began by handing out his diagram of “America’s Political Landscape: The Core Groups.” It graphically represented several political philosophies he has identified (“Progressive Liberals,” “Tax-Cons,” “Theocons,” and “Paleo-Libs,” to name a few) on a Progressive-to-Conservative continuum.

According to his analysis, we are *not* a center-right country. “That’s a fundamental mistake. If we were, how is it that we just elected a ‘socialist, Marxist, communist, Muslim wealth-spreader?’” Mr. Kenney is convinced that our political center is progressive. “We care very deeply about peace and non-violent conflict-resolution; about social and economic justice, about ecology and sustainability.” He is confident that in the U.S. the center is one of “Pragmatic Progressivism” – a view originated long ago in the Republican party – as evidenced by the fact that Sen. Obama carried both Omaha and Atlanta.

What happened, specifically? Mr. Kenney suggested many factors, including “The Reagan coalition fell apart (a good thing)...More and more mainstream Democrats and conservatives became increasingly uncomfortable with the Neocon agenda...There’s been a transformation in the Intermountain West states,” where the majority of governors are now Democratic. Also, “Many Baby-Boomers from blue states have moved to the South”; “Democrats are more trusted, fiscally”; and of the two major parties, “the Republicans focused on attacks, not substance.”

Report from the Observer Corps

At the November 10 City Council meeting, Carolyn Callopy, Sustainability Coordinator for the City, made a special presentation on the City's "Climate Action Plan." The plan was developed in partnership with the Network for Evanston's Future and about nine focus groups, comprised of volunteers, both experts and interested citizens. The plan suggests over 200 strategies to reduce carbon emissions.

Susan Munro, chair of the Housing Commission, made a presentation on the Commission's plan to develop an Affordable Housing Comprehensive Plan. She asked that money from the affordable housing funds be used to hire a consultant so that the plan can be implemented as soon as

(Continued on Page 5)

**Antidote to the January Blahs:
Attend the Annual LWVIL "Issues Briefing"**

On Saturday, January 31, 2009, the Illinois League will present a series of presentations and workshops on issues of special interest to Illinois League members. This is an ideal way to increase your knowledge of current events, and to gain a more in-depth understanding of a League topic, such as moderating forums or increasing membership.

This year's event will be held at the University Center, 525 S. State Street in Chicago. The cost has been set – tentatively – at \$50 for the entire day, \$30 for just the morning, or \$35 for just the afternoon. If you're interested, please reserve the date and watch for further details.

Note: If you'd love to attend but the cost is prohibitive, please contact LWVE president Karen Hunt, to see if something can be worked out.

Come Wrap with Us!

If you can, please sign up for a book-wrapping shift at Borders or Barnes & Noble in Evanston on December 18, 20, and/or 23. This is a fun and simple opportunity to hold both a minor fund-raiser and a Public Relations event.

If you can help out, contact Sonia Evenstad ASAP, at evenstad@sbcglobal.net or 847-869-5112, and let her know when you'll be available.



Book-wrapping for fun and profit in another year were Marge Wold, Emily Guthrie, and Shirley Shevick

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Time to Get to Work on the City Elections!

Rest time is over! It's time to get to work on the candidate forums for the City elections. As *The Intercom* goes to press, there are already five candidates for Mayor, which means there will be a Consolidated Primary Election on February 24. The Consolidated General Election will take place on April 7.

The *Evanston Review* contacted the LWVE to propose co-sponsorship of two election projects: a Primary Election candidate forum for the Mayor's office, and a Voter's Guide for the Mayor and Aldermanic races for the April election. The LWVE and the *Evanston Review* co-sponsored these same projects in 1993. That election, which brought Mayor Morton to office, also had a large field of candidates requiring a Primary election.

The LWVE Board approved the *Evanston Review's* proposal at the November 13 board meeting.

All interested volunteers – for the Voter's Guide and the candidate forums – should contact Judy Hoffman
SAP: judhof@aol.com or 847-491-6275.

Thinking of Running for Local Office? Planning to Help a Friend Who Is?

By Sue Calder

Municipal and school board elections in Evanston are set for April, 2009. If you are considering running for a local office, or working on someone else's campaign, Public Service Challenge (PSC) workshops are for you!

The PSC is a collaboration of a number of civic groups, including the LWVE, offering non-partisan, half-day workshops that provide practical information about running a campaign. It brings together experts and leaders to shed light on such topics as nominating petitions, campaign organizing, legal requirements for public office, fund-raising activities, election laws and reporting requirements.

The second of this year's two workshops – "Nuts and Bolts of Campaigning" – will be presented on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 8 a. m. to noon, at the Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge, in the Parasol Room. The fee is \$15.

To sign up for the Dec. 6 workshop, print a Registration Form from www.evanstonpublicservicechallenge.org. Fill it out and mail it, with your check, to the address provided. For more information, contact Marybeth Schroeder, Senior Program Officer at Leadership Evanston, at 847-492-0992.

Observer Corps Report (continued from Page 4)

possible. Ald. Ann Rainey said she is opposed to spending money for a consultant and believes the same money can be used to help low income people.

The Planning and Development Committee discussed the Plan Commission's recommendation to approve the Draft Downtown Plan. Its goal is a mixed-use, very active, accessible, and economically successful downtown. The focus was on local business, sustainable green development, reuse of downtown buildings, transportation, arts and cultural activities.

For more complete Observer reports, visit our www.lwve.org Web site.

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Important Report from the LWVCC

By Betty Hayford

A committee of the League of Women Voters of Cook County (the LWVCC, an Interleague organization) has been working for many months in trying to decipher Cook County government, particularly its allocation of expenditures and employees. This effort is part of a larger project to evaluate transparency and accountability in Cook County government, focusing on those departments that report to Cook County Board President Todd Stroger.

The results of the research will be presented in a 150-page report titled “Where Does Cook County Spend Our Money?” which will be distributed to Cook County Board Commissioners and other elected Cook County officials as they prepare to discuss the 2009 County budget. The report outlines inconsistencies and apparent contradictions in published documents, and it notes areas where information is confusing. The lack of clarity inhibits the ability of Cook County residents to participate in improving their government.

The LWVCC expects to have the report available on their Web site, cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org in the near future. Be sure to visit that site; it’s a treasure house of information.

Report on November Poll-Reporting Effort

By Melissa Leasia

Even though many of our members had other important duties on Election Day, the Evanston League still managed to visit and report on conditions at 45 Evanston polling places – covering more than half of Evanston’s 70 precincts. For the most part, we were pleased to see that polls opened on time, rooms were adequate, equipment worked and things ran smoothly, despite record turn-out.

Even so, wise comments and helpful suggestions were provided by many of the judges interviewed. Suggestions for improving accessibility, signage, set-up, and training were the most prevalent. Many of the polling places could have used additional touch-screen machines and “I voted” stickers. Many judges pointed out that, once the polls opened, they had no time to compare the names of the large number of early voters to the registers of those who hadn’t yet voted. Though I’ve been told that no one would have been able to vote twice, I couldn’t help but chuckle to myself, “Vote early and vote often.”

Information gathered by our intrepid poll-reporters will be summarized by the Cook County League and presented to David Orr’s office, where it is always carefully considered and where appropriate changes are made. Thank you to all the LWVE members who took the time to help in this back-stage but important effort.

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Jill Schoenwetter
9339 Ridgeway, Evanston 60201
847-733-7400; jschoenwetter@firstbt.com

Additional Membership Directory Changes

- Delete Linda Foreman's home telephone number, and add "N" to her street address (9241 N. Drake).
- Caroline Frowe's correct e-mail address really is carfrw@att.net.
- Janette King's e-mail address is janking6@aol.com.

Lynne Simon (joined at the LWVUS level)
404 Church Street, Evanston 60201
847-328-8779; marcus1120@aol.com



Would You Like to Work on the 2010 Edition of *This Is Evanston*?

A 2010 *This Is Evanston* committee is forming. If this would be fun project for you, please contact Karen Telser at 847-866-8466 or kftelser@comcast.net.



More Members, More Clout

As the League of Women Voters grows in number, our lobbying power increases at all governmental levels: national, state, county, and local. The more members our local League has, the more ambitious and exciting our studies and educational initiatives can be. Please don't hesitate to invite friends and family to join; you will be doing them, and our democracy, a service.

Join the LWVE's Dynamic Corps of Office Volunteers!

Be "on duty" for one week, every seven weeks:

- Check telephone and e-mail messages (from home) each day.
- Go into the LWVE office at the Civic Center on Weds. and Fri. morning to open USPS mail and take care of a few other tasks.

If this opportunity to support our League sounds interesting to you, contact Katy Pendleton at 847-328-1936 or katypen@comcast.net.

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